not yet come up to his room, he was likely to be in the study. He would doubtless be thinking out how to answer the Queen's command.

"If I went to him now we would be . . alone and he would . . kiss me again," Luella could not help thinking. The idea sent a shaft of fire streaking through her body. It brought back for an instant the ecstasy she had known when he kissed her before. Then she knew that the one thing she could never do if she really loved him was to hurt him in any way. "I . . love him! I love . . him!" The words kept repeating themselves over and over in her mind as she dressed.

She put on the pretty gown with the coat she had worn on the journey to London. When she was ready she very cautiously opened her bedroom door. Lights were still burning in some of the silver sconces in the corridor. She could therefore see to the end of the passage where the stairs joined it. The big chandelier in the hall was no longer alight.

She had already worked out how she could leave the house. There would be a night footman on duty near the front who would think it strange for her to be going out alone at night. He might try to dissuade her.

Then she remembered how Enrico had told her about a door in the wall at the end of the garden which led into the mews. She thought he had probably obtained the information from a maid. He had taken Luella to the window and pointing across the garden said: " 'Rico ride . . beeg . . horses. They in . . stables . . there."

"We will go and see them as soon as we have time," Luella had promised.

"Go . . now! Go . . now!" he had demanded.

As it was time for them to go downstairs, she had told him they would have to wait until tomorrow morning. How could she have guessed then that by tomorrow morning Enrico would have gone to a happy home? She, on the other hand, would be completely alone in the world with only her memories of the Duke.

She slipped out through her bedroom door and walked on tip-toe down the corridor. She knew that the staircase at the far end of it was used only by the servants. Her suitcase was not heavy, only cumbersome. She manoeuvred it carefully down the stairs so as not to make a noise. She had no difficulty in finding the door that led into the garden. It was not bolted and she opened it easily.

It was a warm night without a wind. The moon and the stars were turning the leaves to silver. The trunks of the large trees created deep shadows over the well-kept lawn.

Carrying her suitcase in her right hand, Luella started to walk on the grass, so that her feet would make no sound. She had nearly reached the wall in which was the door leading into the mews. Suddenly she was aware of a movement. Then a man appeared in front of her. Because she was so startled she gave a little scream. As she put her hand to her mouth to suppress it, she realised it was the Duke.

"Whatever are you doing out here at this time of the night?" he asked. "And where on earth are you going?"